

June is PTSD Awareness Month. PTSD is the abbreviation of the mental health condition: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD is often associated with war veterans, and sometimes referred to as “shell shock”. However, anyone can develop this disorder. It impacts all ages, ethnicities, cultures, and genders. PTSD often impacts those who have experienced or witnessed an accident, disaster, or other traumatic event.

#### **PTSD Facts according to the American Psychiatric Association (APA)**

- PTSD affects approximately 3.5% of US adults every year
- An estimated 1 in 11 people will be diagnosed with PTSD in their lifetime
- Women are twice as likely as men to have PTSD
- Three ethnic groups (U.S. Latinos, African Americans, and American Indians) are disproportionately affected and have higher rates of PTSD than non-Latino whites



#### **Symptoms**

1. Intrusive memories: recurrent, unwanted memories, flashbacks, feeling of reliving the traumatic event, and nightmares
2. Avoidance: avoid thinking/talking about traumatic event, avoid reminders of traumatic event – places, people, sounds, activities, etc.
3. Negative changes in thinking and mood: negative and hopeless thoughts about self and others, memory problems, lack of interest in activities, feeling numb, and challenges with relationships
4. Changes in physical and emotional reactions: easily startled/frightened, feeling on guard, trouble sleeping, irritability, anger, increased/decreased appetite, and self-destructive behavior

Symptoms can vary from person to person. The intensity of symptoms will likely increase when a person is under great stress or is triggered by reminders of traumatic experiences.

#### **Causes**

PTSD may develop when a person goes through, witnesses, or learns about a traumatic event often involving actual or threatened death, injury, or sexual violation. Some of the common types of traumatic events that can lead to PTSD are: combat exposure, physical abuse, sexual abuse/violence, physical assault, an accident, or being threatened with a weapon.

#### **Treatment**

If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, it is recommended to follow up with your doctor and/or a mental health professional. Potential methods of treatment may include: medication, talking with members of your support system, faith-based support, and individual or group therapy.

#### **Interested in learning more about PTSD:**

- June 17<sup>th</sup> [National Institute of Mental Health Livestream Event on PTSD](#)
- American Psychiatric Association article [“What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder”](#)
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: [National Center for PTSD](#)

**Resources:**

- Crisis Text Line                      Text TALK to 741741
- Veterans Crisis Line                1-800-273-8255, press 1
- Disaster Distress Helpline        1-800-985-5990
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255